



BCYF Legislative Impact Survey

What Grantees & Community Partners Said About Council Bill 25-0100

Prepared for City Council Sponsors | Baltimore Children & Youth Fund (BCYF)



Why We're Here

- Share what we heard from BCYF grantees, youth leaders, and community partners
- Highlight key operational and equity impacts raised in the survey
- Provide BCYF recommendations to support accountability without limiting effectiveness
- Offer practical amendments/clarifications for Council consideration



Objectives for Council Discussion

- Center grantee and community voice
- Protect trust-based, community-centered grantmaking
- Prevent policy decisions that increase administrative burden
- Reinforce equity as a practice; not a compliance checkbox
- Strengthen accountability without undermining effectiveness
- Avoiding unintended duplication or operational constraints, since BCYF operations are already governed by a City MOU



What BCYF Was Created to Do

BCYF was created by Baltimore voters to:

- Center community voice
- Advance equity
- Invest in youth-serving organizations
- Strengthen the youth development ecosystem

We envision **a more just, creative, and abundant Baltimore** where all young people live, thrive, and lead.

We envision an ecosystem of sustainable youth programs with full agency, liberated from the harm of structural racism and inequity, and able to thrive in abundance.



About BCYF

BCYF advances equity and opportunity through community-rooted grantmaking.

We were established by Baltimore voters.

Our mission is to support youth development organizations and leaders.

Our vision is a just, abundant, and creative Baltimore.



BCYF's Impact: Strengthening Baltimore's Youth & Communities

300+



**Hours of Training to
Strengthen Organizations**

100+

**Organizations
Funded**

(80%+ multi-year grants)

\$42M+

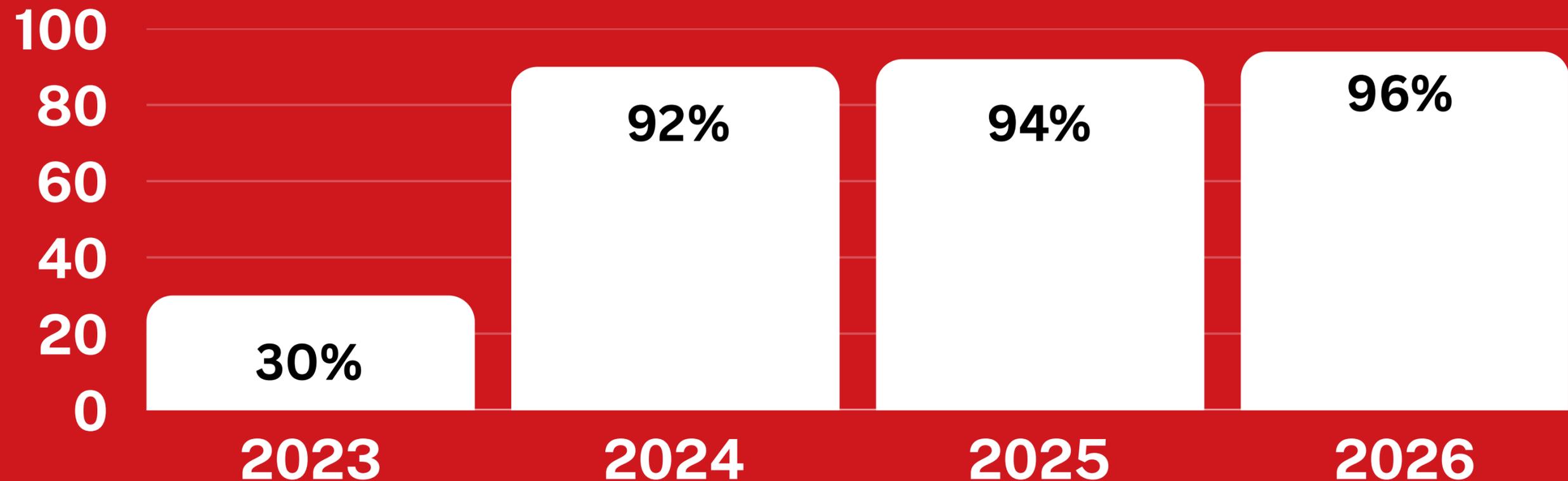
**Awarded
Since 2020**

17,000+

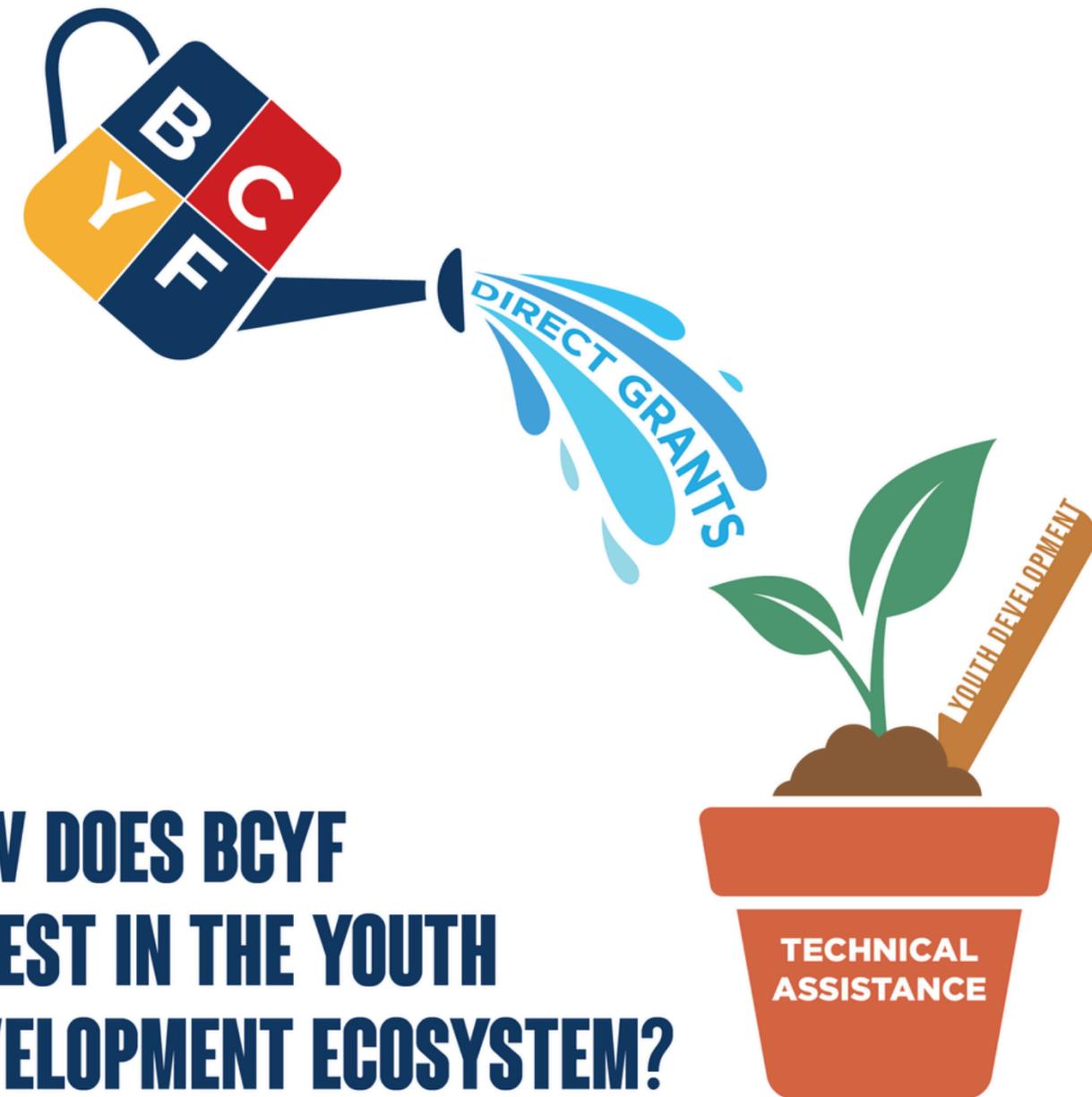
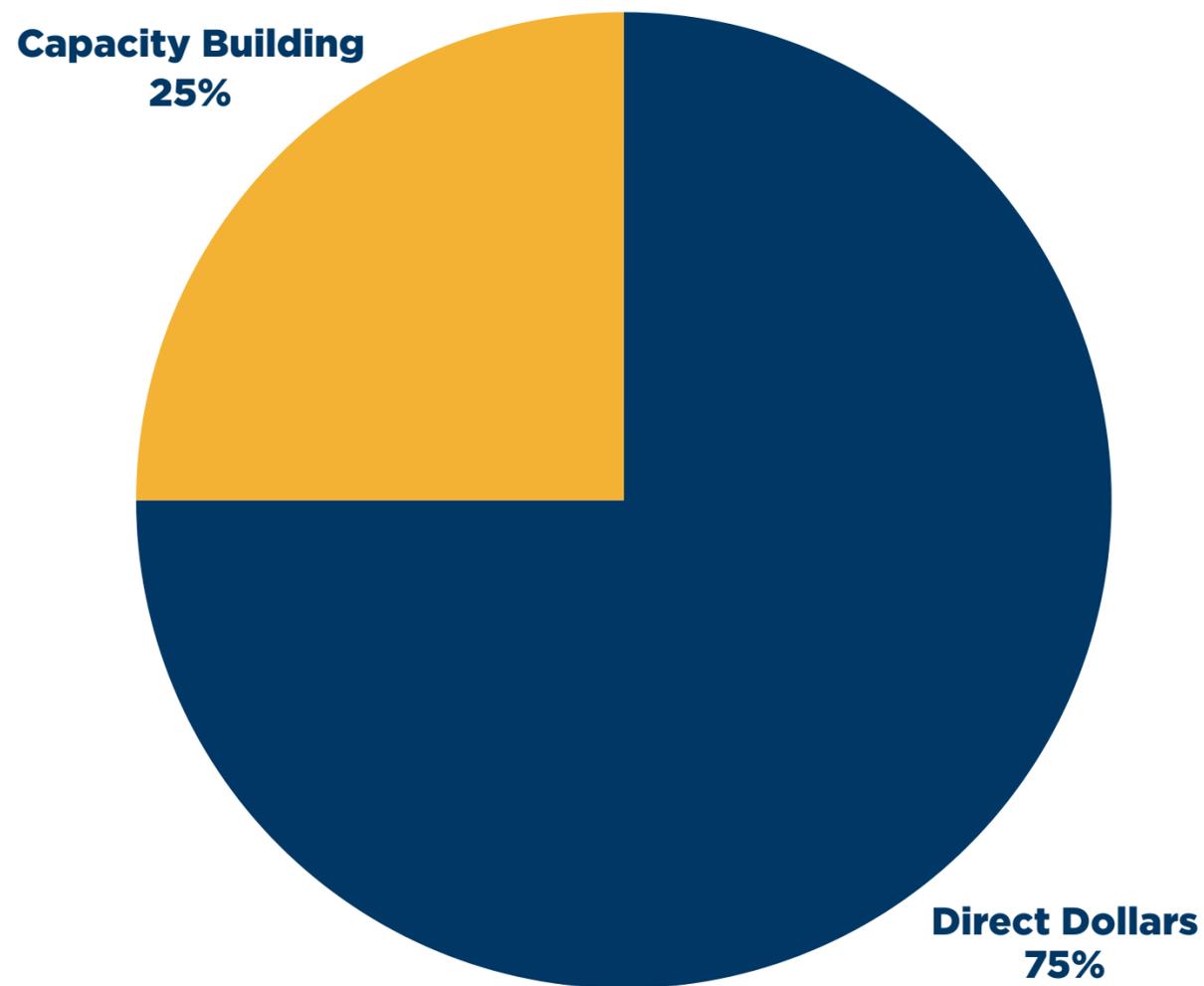
Baltimore Youth Seats Citywide

BCYF's Impact: Strengthening Baltimore's Youth & Communities

**Grantee Compliance Increased from
30% to 96%**



BCYF's Dual Grantmaking Approach



HOW DOES BCYF INVEST IN THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM?

A balance of accountability

- A City-BCYF MOU
- Annual independent audits
- IRS nonprofit reporting
- Risk-based financial monitoring
- Post-award site visits
- Annual City Council hearings
- City financial reporting and performance audits



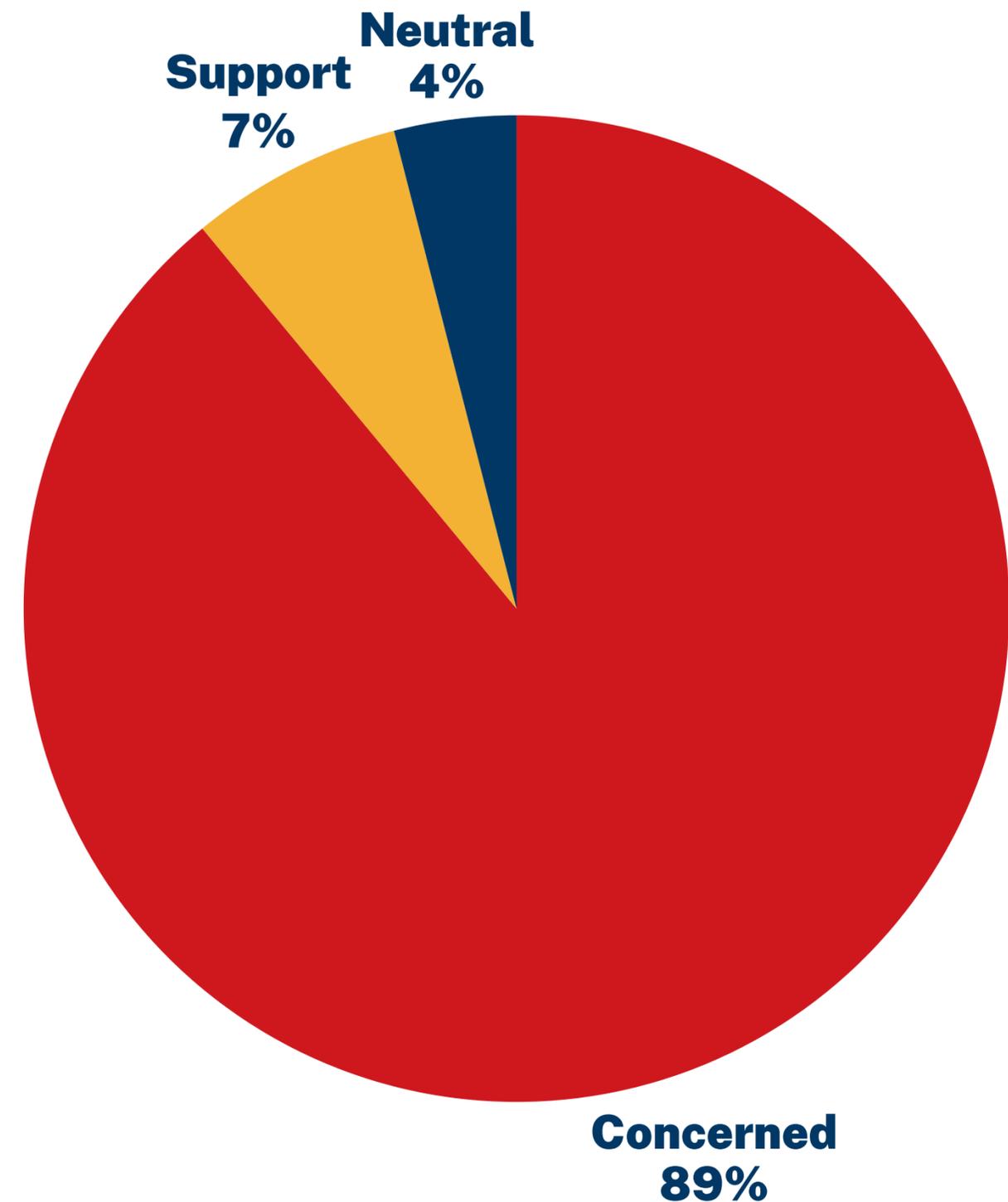
Survey Respondents

- Responses reflect grantees, youth-serving partners, and community-based organizations
- Respondents were:
 - 82% tax-exempt organizations
 - 16% fiscally sponsored



Overall Sentiment: High Concern

Respondents overwhelmingly believe the bill would reduce BCYF's flexibility and increase burden for youth-serving organizations.



Top Areas of Greatest Negative Impact

1	Reduced ability to run flexible youth programs like YEPP	91% agree
2	Reduced ability to deliver rapid-response funding	84% agree
3	Harder to improve grant application/review systems over time	89% agree
4	Increased reporting burden reduces time with youth	87% agree
5	Reduced community/youth voice in funding decisions	82% agree

What We Heard → **What BCYF Recommends**

Practical adjustments to strengthen accountability while preserving effectiveness



Grantmaking Processes Should Be Adaptable, Not Codified

What We Heard (Survey):

- **89% agree** detailed requirements in City law would make it harder for BCYF to improve grant processes over time

What It Means (Impact):

- BCYF would be locked into outdated grantmaking models
- Continuous improvement becomes difficult without legislative change

BCYF Recommendation

- Keep operational grant procedures governed through the **MOU + BCYF policies**, not City Code
- Legislation should set **guardrails and principles**, not step-by-step operations

Youth Programs Require Real-Time Adaptation

What We Heard (Survey):

- **91% agree** fixed timelines and communications rules would make it harder to run flexible programs like YEPP

What It Means (Impact):

- Youth opportunities often follow school-year cycles, seasonal timelines, and urgent needs
- Delays mean youth lose access to opportunities

BCYF Recommendation

- Explicitly preserve flexibility for youth-centered programs
- Avoid statutory timelines that restrict program design

Rapid Response Is Designed for Emergencies

What We Heard (Survey):

- **84% agree** fast funding programs would become harder or impossible to operate
- **98% say** bill would limit BCYF's ability to respond quickly to urgent needs

What It Means (Impact):

- Emergencies require quick turnaround (violence prevention, youth safety, crisis response, displacement)

BCYF Recommendation

- Maintain authority for expedited grantmaking processes
- Codify outcomes/accountability expectations—not rigid timelines

Community Voice Is a Core Feature of BCYF

What We Heard (Survey):

- **82% agree** the bill language would limit youth/community role in funding decisions

What It Means (Impact):

- Weakening community engagement reduces trust and equity impact
- Participatory models require staffing and investment to run well

BCYF Recommendation

- **Restore public engagement allocation to 5%**

Emerging Leaders Need Support Pathways

What We Heard (Survey):

- **87% agree** restricting capacity-building to tax-exempt orgs would harm grassroots growth

What It Means (Impact):

- Many community-rooted groups operate nontraditionally early on
- Excluding them undermines the ecosystem pipeline

BCYF Recommendation

- Allow capacity-building for **all members of Baltimore's youth-development ecosystem**

Caps Limit Strategic, Equity-Driven Investment

What We Heard (Survey):

- **87% agree** the 20% cap limits long-term investment and catalytic funding

BCYF Recommendation

- Remove or revise the 20% cap to allow Board-approved strategic investments

What It Means (Impact):

- Larger investments are sometimes required to scale impact
- Caps can unintentionally penalize high-performing programs

Programs Most Likely to Be Harmed



Which BCYF Programs Respondents Believe Are Most At Risk:

- President's Fund
- Capacity-building programs
- YEPP
- Community Review Panels
- Charm City Youth Athletics Fund

These are programs that depend on flexibility, community voice, and rapid decision-making.





Equity & Ecosystem Impacts



Who Would Be Hit Hardest?

- Small/grassroots organizations with limited staff
- New/emerging organizations
- Youth-led organizations
- Organizations without stable administrative infrastructure
- Programs requiring rapid deployment of funds

Respondents believe the bill would unintentionally reinforce inequity by raising barriers to access.



Direct Voices From the Field

“

BCYF... goes beyond traditional grant making models...
The restrictions... would hamper the very ingenuity that
makes the model so effective.

”

“

Any changes should prioritize accessible
funding pathways for smaller community
organizations...

”

“

More time would be spent on
administrative minutiae and less time
spent servicing youth...

”





BCYF

Recommendations for Bill Sponsors

What We Heard → What We Recommend

What We Heard (Survey)	BCYF Recommendation
Grant process details in law reduce flexibility	Keep operations governed through MOU + policy
YEPP and flexible youth programs would be constrained	Protect flexible program design authority
Rapid response would be weakened	Allow expedited funding mechanisms
Community voice is weakened	Restore 5% for community engagement
Emerging/non-tax-exempt groups lose support	Allow capacity-building for all members of Baltimore's youth-development ecosystem
20% cap blocks long-term investment	Remove or revise cap

What We Heard:

- Strong concern that the bill increases rigidity, burden, and barriers
- Fear that programs designed for flexibility will be weakened

What It Means:

- The bill may unintentionally reduce BCYF's effectiveness and equity impact
- Community partners call on City Council to streamline this legislation, avoid duplicating the MOU, and preserve flexibility to meet community needs

What We Want To Revisit:

- A second in-person working session, led by BCYF and our grantees, to support more thorough community feedback



Call to Action

BCYF respectfully requests that the Council:

1. Focus the legislation on oversight principles — not operational procedures

- Maintain strong accountability standards
- Avoid codifying step-by-step grantmaking processes in City Code
- Align statutory language with the existing MOU governance framework

2. Incorporate targeted amendments based on grantee feedback

- Preserve flexibility for youth programs and rapid-response funding
- Restore the 5% allocation for community engagement
- Maintain ecosystem-wide eligibility for capacity-building
- Align reporting requirements with a risk-based framework
- Revisit the 20% grant cap to allow Board-approved strategic investments

3. Convene a structured working session prior to final passage

- Led by BCYF, grantees, and community partners
- Ensure final language reflects real implementation conditions
- Strengthen transparency while preventing unintended operational constraints





Thank You!



Suspension Process

- Temporary pause on BCYF-funded activities, spending, and reporting due to serious unresolved compliance issues
- Time-bound process with a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and regular Program Officer check-ins
- Used when corrective action is needed but termination is not warranted
- Provides structured expectations, documentation, and staff support to help grantees return to compliance



Effectiveness

- Early use shows suspension can be an effective compliance and capacity-building tool
- At least one suspended grantee has successfully returned to full compliance
- Structured pause + staff support helped the organization resolve long-standing reporting issues
- Demonstrates suspension can strengthen systems while maintaining accountability



BCYF Compliance Intervention Process:

Purpose

- Structured, supportive process to help grantees return to compliance
- Escalates only if issues remain unresolved

Core Rule

- **No disbursement until compliance requirements are met**
- Payments may be **paused** while issues are addressed

Intervention Levels (Escalating Support)

Level 1 - Reminder

Email notice + monthly compliance reporting

Level 2 - PO Support

Informal check-ins, spending review, timelines

Level 3 - Official Compliance Meeting

Written notice + 30/60/90-day plan

Level 4 - Leadership Meeting

Corrective action plan with leadership

Level 5 - Final Compliance Meeting

Final opportunity before consequences

Level 6 - Suspension/Termination

Funding paused or ended; eligibility reviewed